

Anthrax: Profile of a Bio-Warrior; And What the FBI May Have Missed

Strategic Analysis by J.J. Johnson 11.12.01

Recently, the Federal Bureau of Investigation released a psychological profile of the person believed to have sent the three anthrax letters that have killed at least 4, and contaminated our postal system. The authorities have yet to find a culprit. Earlier they had stated, "The culprit doesn't fit the foreign terrorist profile." They are correct. The targets of the anthrax letters make neither sense nor reason for a person even fitting the FBI's profile. We believe we found a logical reason for these letters being sent. To find this culprit - one must think 'out of the box'.

That is what we will do here.

According to the FBI, the first two letters were postmarked Sept. 18, 2001. In our research, we found that this means the anthrax used was probably produced on or before September 11, 2001, as it takes quite a while to manufacture it on your own. The letter dated Oct. 9, 2001 had much more potency than the first two.

We seem to be focusing on 'who' sent the letters more than 'why' the letters were sent. Based on the FBI's profile experts, here are the believed attributes of the culprit:

- is likely an adult male.
- if employed, is likely to be in a position requiring little contact with the public, or other employees. He may work in a laboratory. He is apparently comfortable working with an extremely hazardous material. He probably has a scientific background to some extent, or at least a strong interest in science.
- has likely taken appropriate protective steps to ensure his own safety, which may include the use of an Anthrax vaccination or antibiotics.
- Has access to a source of Anthrax and possesses knowledge and expertise to refine it.
- possesses or has access to some laboratory equipment; i.e., microscope, glassware, centrifuge, etc.
- has exhibited an organized, rational thought process in furtherance of his criminal behavior.
- Has a familiarity, direct or indirect, with the Trenton, NJ, metropolitan area; however, this does not necessarily mean he currently lives in the Trenton, NJ, area.. He is comfortable traveling in and around this locale.
- did not select victims randomly. He made an effort to identify the correct address, including zip code, of each victim and used sufficient postage to ensure proper delivery of the letters. The offender deliberately "selected" NBC News, the New York Post, and the office of Senator Tom Daschle as the targeted victims (and possibly AMI in Florida). These targets are probably very important to the offender. They may have been the focus of previous expressions of contempt which may have been communicated to others, or observed by others.
- is a non-confrontational person, at least in his public life. He lacks the personal skills necessary to confront others. He chooses to confront his problems "long distance" and not face-to-face. He may hold grudges for a long time, vowing that he will get even with "them" one day. There are probably other, earlier examples of this type of behavior. While these earlier incidents were not actual Anthrax mailings, he may

have chosen to anonymously harass other individuals or entities that he perceived as having wronged him. He may also have chosen to utilize the mail on those occasions.

- prefers being by himself more often than not. If he is involved in a personal relationship it will likely be of a self serving nature.

It seems like the FBI has based this profile around a working model of a terrorist or a common criminal. But this profile does not answer many questions. Among them, "why would the person send anthrax to a place that would naturally report what has happened to them when such deadly parcels could have caused much more deaths if sent elsewhere?"

In my opinion, the key to this puzzle is to look at where the letters were sent, and then think 'out of the box', and come up with a plausible reason 'why' those locations would be targeted. The first thing we must do is list the letters, according to the FBI:

EVIDENCE DESCRIPTION

Letter 1 One page, hand-printed letter Transmittal envelope, also similarly hand printed Addressed to "NBC TV - Tom Brokaw" - No return address Postmarked Trenton, NJ 09/18/2001 (Tues.)

Letter 2 One page, hand-printed letter Transmittal envelope, also similarly hand printed Addressed to "NY Post" - No return address Postmarked Trenton, NJ 09/18/2001 (Tues.)

Letter 3 One page, hand-printed letter Transmittal envelope, also similarly hand printed Addressed to "Senator Daschle - 509 Hart Senate Office Building" Return address - "4th Grade, Greendale School, Franklin Park, NJ" Return address zip code - "08852" Postmarked Trenton, NJ 10/09/2001 (Tues.)

What's missing from the FBI list of letters is the letter to the American Media building in Florida that killed a photojournalist. Perhaps this letter wasn't listed because the FBI hasn't obtained the letter itself. However, place the American Media anthrax letter to the top of the list (since it was first), and you'll see that the last letter sent would have been the 4th letter - with a return address of:

"4th Grade, Greendale School, Franklin Park, NJ"

4th letter - 4th grade. Note that the "4th grade letter was of a 'higher grade' than the others. Coincidence?

The profile we've done here is not based on the writing content of the letter, but where and when they were sent. We are not using the evidence to produce a motive, we are instead thinking 'out of the box' - using a possible motive outside the usual FBI profile.

We (as Americans) think with our own logic - not the logic of the culprit(s). Hence, it must be a simple act of terrorism. What if these four (not three) letters were NOT an act of terrorism - yet? **What if it was simply a test or series of tests?**

No, this is not a leap of logic. If the sender of the anthrax letters wanted to kill and terrorize large numbers of Americans, these letters could have been sent to more unsuspecting places. But sending to the addresses above would provide the sender (and his

coconspirators) with the information they desired without having to send operators into the field to check the results. Let's go over them again.

There is no use manufacturing large quantities of anthrax unless you are sure it's going to do the job you want. It's too risky to use live human subjects, and you don't want your 'field testing' to be tracked back to you. You want to make sure you (and possibly others) can track the results without the results being tracked back to you. Take a look at how this could have been done.

Letter #1 (1st grade; 1st test - sent to American Media Building) - home of several well read tabloids. Send it there, wait, then drop by a supermarket and read about the results. Since most major media won't take them seriously anyway, most people would write the report off as mere tabloid journalism. The culprit could have been reading about the results before Tom Brokaw even began to cover it.

Letter #2 (2nd grade; 2nd test) - sent to NBC TV - Tom Brokaw. Letter #3 (3rd grade; 3rd test) sent to Addressed to "NY Post" - No return address. Letters #2 and #3 even tells the recipient "Take Penicillin Now". By now, the media has already gained interest. They will report what is going on, and more importantly - how the local authorities responded. How fast did antibiotics become available for the civilian population? How fast was a given area was sealed off, etc.

Would a terrorist want to kill Brokaw and his staff? Not if terrorism is partly defined as "Theater - with weapons". This enemy uses our media and its own information source. The culprit here clearly did not want Brokaw or his associates dead - just alerted.

Before we get to Letter #4 (4th grade, forth test), let's throw some more logic at the problem. Let's say you got word to some bad guys overseas that you could cook up some anthrax to be used in a massive bio-attack. But you also had to convince them that a) you need time, b) you need money, and c) a place to get the mission done, and c) an exit if possible. The bad guys respond by saying "prove it". The culprit's response is "I'm working on it - watch the results on TV, or read the newspapers".

It's safe - no ties to the culprit or the bad guys. They can sit back and watch from a Mosque, or even an Afghan cave to see the progress. Meanwhile, the culprit keeps cooking his stuff. He's getting better at it. Maybe a little seed money came his way for better equipment (with maybe a better lab placed strategically between Washington and New York - Like Trenton. NJ) with a note "We hope you can do better than this."

Letter #4 (4th grade, 4th test) - Addressed to "Senator Daschle - 509 Hart Senate Office Building". Much more deadly and spreadable than the previous 3, and guaranteed to make news. More importantly, how would Washington respond? The culprit(s) simply watched the results of this 'battlefield testing' on television - with virtually no traces back to the source.

If this analysis is correct, then we should look at the dates again:

Letter #1: anthrax had to have been started in production BEFORE Sept. 11. Letter #2: Anthrax had to have been started in production sometime around Sept. 11. I suspect that the culprit may very well have had 'prior knowledge' of the September 11 attacks, else was told by someone to begin production around that time. Letter 3: Anthrax production

probably began after September 11, and AFTER the first letter hit the American Media Building in Florida. The culprit already knew the result of Letter #1 by then.

If you're going to move to the next phase and build a bigger, more lethal anthrax attack (or your handlers were pleased), material has been sent for major production - this would take a while, and would explain why there have been no more letters. Mr. Anthrax Producer is busy right now. He's alone, for not too many friends would even want to be working around him at this time. Here's where this part of the FBI profile makes sense:

Post-Offense Behavior

He may have exhibited significant behavioral changes at various critical periods of time throughout the course of the Anthrax mailings and related media coverage. These may include the following;

1. Altered physical appearance.
2. Pronounced anxiety.
3. Atypical media interest.
4. Noticeable mood swings.
5. More withdrawn.
6. Unusual level of preoccupation.
7. Unusual absenteeism.
8. Altered sleeping and/or eating habits.

These post-offense behaviors would have been most noticeable during critical times, including but not limited to: the mailing of the letters (09/18/01 and 10/09/01), the death of first Anthrax victim, media reports of each anthrax incident, and especially the illnesses and deaths of non-targeted victims.

To summarize: **The profile of the letters sent could logically have been a test to see how well the localized production of anthrax worked (by watching media reports), before refining the process for a much larger operation.**

If we are correct here, we can also conclude based on our research that:

- a) The culprit cannot move freely right now - he'd have to rebuild the operation elsewhere, making leakage and capture that much easier.
- b) He is probably working alone.
- c) He clearly has working knowledge of the use of equipment and necessary protection against biological weapons.
- d) This operation started before September 11 meaning this person is probably tied to the same network as those responsible for the September 11 attacks (not that being tied makes a difference, but probably that the anthrax producer is of the radical Muslim branch)

The pitfall of the American response to this issue may be the aggressive nature of finding who's responsible, and pointing fingers, and less on building a defensive shield against a next attack. Whatever vaccine is available should be put into maximum production immediately. Also, persons who fit the profile as knowledgeable of such production who may have had prior knowledge of the September 11 attacks should be apprehended immediately for questioning.

A recent news article stated that a student of microbiology at the University of Karachi, Pakistan, had disappeared around the time of the attacks but was recently found and arrested. While his name, Saeed, did not turn up in citations on microbiology, a medical publication search revealed that a Pakistani group studied bacillus subtitles, a strain closely related to anthrax, in the mid 1990's.

Various members of this group have studied enzyme-like substances made by bacteria and there is some research that suggests that the fatal effects of anthrax toxin are a result of its ability to break down peptides, similar to a peptidase (a natural body enzyme). Even more interesting, there is a subset of this group that extensively studied substances that acted somewhat like trypsin, a specific type of peptidase, and other enzymes, in the venom of snakes and scorpions. These papers are dated between the late 1980's to mid 1990's.

Nancy Johnson also contributed to this report.

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